

Dear Judge Kaplan,

I met Sam Bankman-Fried in 2007 at a five-week summer math camp and lived with him for two years, 2012-2014, in a house ("ET") of about 15 MIT students. In the time I knew him, Sam was responsible, was pleasant to be around, and cared about doing good for the world.

Responsibilities:

For most of our shared time at ET, I was responsible for making sure that house chores were all done and fairly divided. Sam did his fair share of chores, usually by washing the pots and dishes used in cooking our meals and doing our kitchen laundry. He consistently did so well and on time; I only observed him late once, when a queue for the washing machine delayed the kitchen laundry.

He volunteered to serve as ET's uncompensated "commander" for one year; most commanders after him only agreed to take the position in exchange for a reduced workload of other chores.

In 2013-2014, ET had a shortage of students with drivers' licenses who could do another of our chores, driving our van between ET and the center of MIT's campus before and after classes. Sam agreed to drive some of those van runs, instead of his preferred chore of washing pots, and to do a slightly bigger share of chores than our non-drivers.

Doing good for the world:

Sam was consistently vegan in the time I lived with him, because he wanted to reduce farm animals' suffering. He was happy to discuss this (but not pushy, unlike stereotypical vegans), and by 2014 had converted about half of ET to vegetarianism or veganism. I did not become vegetarian or vegan, but I respected his efforts.

Sam also took action on causes other than reducing animal suffering: he ran an event in which he gave MIT students \$1 to donate to one of three charities (the Against Malaria Foundation, the Make-A-Wish Foundation, and a third I don't remember) with descriptions of what they could accomplish with how much money, hoping to get MIT students to think about effectively doing good for the world.

Pleasantness to be around:

Many of my interactions with Sam were over board games: playing them and discussing board game design. Sam had good ideas of his own, and listened to and seriously considered my and others' ideas.

I remember occasionally having intellectually interesting talks with Sam. In particular, in 2014, Sam took a class in linguistics, an area of expertise of mine. Although he took the class primarily as a graduation requirement, he cared about doing it properly, so he gave a practice talk to me about some of what he was doing in the class. I found this talk interesting and suggested other directions for him to look into.

I don't know to what extent a character reference from a decade ago should affect Sam's sentencing, but to whatever extent it does, my impression of Sam was almost uniformly positive and is an argument for leniency in his sentence.

Sincerely,
Dr. Adam Hesterberg (MIT PhD class of 2018)